

BASIS SCOTTSDALE GAZETTE

BASIS' First Coast Guard Commit

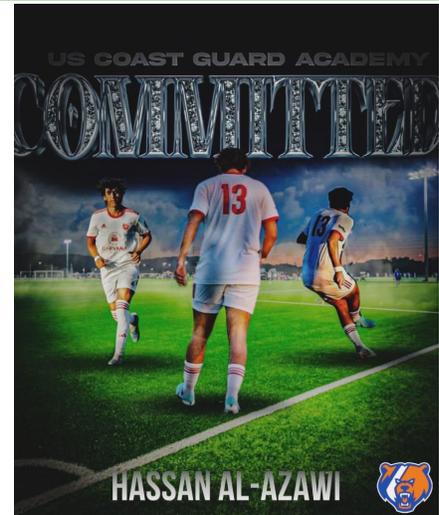
by Ram Bubby

BASIS Scottsdale has earned itself a reputation for rigorous academics, with most of its students graduating to pursue STEM careers. However, one student this year has not only committed to college as a student athlete, but also has become our school's first person to join the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. I had the pleasure of interviewing Hassan Al-Azawi to get some insight into his journey and see what his aspirations are.

RB: Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hassan Al-Azawi: My name is Hassan, and I am a senior. I recently committed to play soccer at the United States Coast Guard Academy.

RB: Why did you want to commit to the Coast Guard Academy?



Source: Hassan Al- Azawi

SAVE THE DATE

High School Musical
Production– 12/8 and
12/9

Winter Formal– 12/16

Winter Break Begins–
12/23

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HA: I had many opportunities across different Division 1 to Division 3 schools. I ultimately chose Coast Guard because of the prestige associated with going to a military academy as well as the academic and soccer opportunities. Also, the coaching staff I met believe in me, and think I will contribute a lot to the team in my freshman year.

RB: *How does it feel being the first BASIS Coast Guard commit?*

HA: I am very proud because I am one of the few BASIS Students who are able to go to a Military Academy, so I am establishing a path that hopefully other BASIS students see as a possibility for their future. The Coast Guard is a competitive school that is free for its students to pursue their majors, and as such, it offers a different type of college experience than the schools BASIS students are typically at.

RB: *How has your journey been through soccer from when you started till now, and how did you know you wanted to continue at the next level?*

HA: My journey has had ups and downs. When I first started, I wasn't placed on the highest level, and in fact, I was on some of the lower ranked teams for a while. This all changed after quarantine, because I practiced significantly harder to close the gap and get my skills to where they needed to be. I started playing MLS NEXT 3 years ago, which is the highest level of youth

soccer in North America. The experiences I had here have developed me on and off the field into the athlete I am today.

RB: *How has your soccer career affected your student life at BASIS?*

HA: Pursuing soccer has made my student life pretty difficult because of the rigor and amount of work that BASIS students must complete. It has been difficult to manage the travel schedule for soccer while completing makeup work, studying for AP exams, and going to student hours. Despite this, it feels great now that I have gone through it since I know I can balance being a student athlete at an academic intense school while playing soccer at the highest level.

RB: *Who have been your biggest supporters and have your teachers supported your soccer career?*

HA: My biggest supporters are definitely my parents. The amount of time, energy, and money they have spent in taking me to showcases and games and traveling to California several times a month. I really appreciate everything they and my brother and sister have done to support me; they have all been great throughout this process, I couldn't be more thankful for my family. Also, I appreciate my teachers for being extremely flexible in allowing me to miss class and make up work for my games, because this is a privilege not given to everyone.

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RB: *Walk us through a day in your life as a student athlete.*

HA: My days always start early, and I am out training by 5:30 AM. After this I go back home, eat, and get ready for school. I typically leave school around 2:45 to go for my team training at the Phoenix Rising Facilities. If I still have time I will go to the gym a bit more, otherwise I go home, finish my work and then go to sleep early to start again the next day.

RB: *What is a challenge you have overcome in school?*

HA: One challenge that I have overcome in school is balancing my course load with the busy travel schedule. In my junior year for example I was in seven AP classes, and taking these seven exams while not being able to study consistently on weekends or in school has made it difficult. Although, I overcame this by using every bit of free time I had to stay caught up in my classes. Having gone through this at BASIS, I feel more prepared to go through a similar process at the Coast Guard Academy.

RB: *What is a challenge you have faced out of school?*

HA: My biggest struggle on the field has been managing my body and conditioning. It's easy to fall into the trap of overworking and burning out or getting injured especially as an athlete.

Learning how to listen to my body and knowing when to rest has been a hard skill to develop. In the summer after my sophomore year, I struggled with back and knee injuries due to overuse. This was the turning point when I really learned how to prioritize rest and recovery instead of constant training.

RB: *What are you most looking forward to at the Coast Guard Academy?*

HA: I am most looking forward to beginning my military career and playing soccer. I plan to hopefully go into flight school or medical school after my four years in the Coast Guard.

Hassan has truly dedicated himself to soccer over these past years, and he has shown another path for BASIS students who are passionate about playing a sport with high academics too. Congratulations to Hassan for his incredible achievements, and we wish him the best at the Coast Guard Academy.



Source: Brookings Institute

School Choice

by Claire Hong

The term “school choice” refers to a program or policy in which students are given the choice to attend a school other than their district's public school. This includes private schools, magnet schools, home schooling, public schools in other districts and of course, charter schools. Using public funds, these policies/programs are able to create more vouchers (publicly funded scholarships students use for private school tuition) and fund more charter schools.

Advocates of school choice claim that not only does it allow parents to choose a school that fits their child best, but also, it gives an incentive to public schools to improve as they are faced with more competition. However, critics say that public funds should be left to public schools that are legally required to admit every student that enrolls, while private and charter schools can be more selective with students.

Charter schools in particular have become a big part of this debate. A charter school is defined as a school that is funded with public money but is operated independently (meaning they are not subjected to the usual laws and regulations public schools must follow). Charter schools have become a lot more common in the last few years, and the money that previously would've funded traditional public schools now goes to charter schools. Because of this lack of funding, public schools are forced to cut programs— or even shut down. This problem has

been increasing as pro-charter legislation has passed, giving more funding to charter schools and less to public schools.

But are charter schools *really* better than public schools? Statistically, charter schools do not perform better than public schools, as results vary between states. In Arizona, charter schools do seem to be out-performing public schools, but states like Michigan, show no difference between charter and public, with some grades performing worse in charter schools than in conventional public schools. Although charter schools are the fastest growing choice, there is no conclusive evidence that they are any better than public schools.

As the 2024 elections roll around, school choice becomes more prominent, as candidates use the debate as key talking points in their campaigns; thus, its important that we educate ourselves on the many parts of our education system.



Source: Orange County Register

CURRENT EVENTS

And That's a Wrap!

by Neha Jasthi

One-hundred and eighteen days later...the actors' strike is finally over! The Screen Actors Guild (SAG), which represents over 160,000 actors, was on strike in an attempt to negotiate a compromise with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), which represents streaming services, film studios, and television networks. As of November 9th, the strike has officially come to an end.

After almost four months on hold, the disruptions due to the strike have cost Hollywood more than 6 billion dollars in lost output. However, it seems to be worth it because the tentative agreement is valued at over a billion dollars in increased wages for current actors. This kind of money can drastically improve the living conditions of many actors. Other improvements include the protection from AI technology, proper hair and makeup to accommodate a diverse cast, streaming residuals, and better working conditions for background actors. While AI technology is not completely banned, the agreement between SAG and AMPTP ensures that all use of AI will be handled in a cautious manner where the actor is fully aware of the circumstances and is properly compensated for the use of their likeness in works.

There have also been stricter regulations about the treatment and accommodation of background actors and actors with diverse features

that were not previously treated well. The new contract guarantees that hair and makeup artists must be professional, and they should be able to properly accommodate the features of a diverse cast of actors. Finally, one of the biggest issues plaguing actors in the last decades— streaming services— has finally been addressed by SAG. This issue has been known notorious for causing many issues between actors and big companies such as Scarlett Johansson's infamous lawsuit with Disney over the *Black Widow* movie's position on Disney+.

There has been some new terms in the tentative agreement that will make sure that actors will be given some of the profit from streaming services in addition to their initial salary. Hopefully, this will help mend the disparity between the members of SAG and the members of AMPTP.

During the strike, living conditions for many people working in the film industry, not just actors, were greatly altered. At a time where most productions were shut down due to the lack of performers, members of the film crew also faced difficulties making ends meet. Hopefully, many people can return to work with better conditions under the new contract between SAG and the AMPTP.

Calculated Cinema: the Choices Behind Movie Release Dates

by Abhinav Ravichand

Imagine it's summertime, and the sun is shining bright. What's hitting the theaters? Explosive and expensive blockbusters like *Mission Impossible*, *Transformers*, or a new Marvel movie. Why? Because summer is when schools are out, families are planning vacations, and studios are ready to cash in on the blockbuster craze— it's the perfect recipe for a cinematic adventure.

Now, shift gears to winter. The air is chilly, and holiday decorations are up. What's gracing the silver screen? Films like *"Star Wars"* or Christmas-themed movies. Studios know people are in the mood for magic and a cozy movie night, making winter the ideal season for such releases.

But studios also consider more than just the seasons: competitors are important too. Many movies did not clash with *"Avengers: Endgame"* in April 2019 (except *Shazam*). It was a smart move, considering *Endgame's* huge success. Studios often avoid head-to-head battles unless they are sure their film is as big and special as their competitor (like the recent *Barbie* versus *Oppenheimer*).

You might have noticed that trailers for very big movies drop months in advance. Take



Source: AMC Theatres

"The Dark Knight," for instance. The hype started building long before Gotham's hero hit the screens. That's no accident; it is a calculated tactic to create buzz and anticipation, ensuring fans are counting down the days until the release. Newer movies like Zack Snyder's *"Rebel Moon"* and some Marvel movies are also doing the same to get people hyped for their movies.

Now, with the SAG-AFTRA strike and the WGA strike over, all the newer movies are shifting their release dates, trying to find the optimal time to gain the attention of millions.

HOLIDAY HUM

Countdown to Christmas: Exploring the History of Advent Calendars by Andrew Kang

With Mariah Carey fully defrosted and public spaces adorned with beautifully decorated Christmas trees, the Christmas spirit is finally in full swing. Festive customers splurge their money on everything Christmas-related from gifts to snowman inflatables. One particular item that has received immense popularity over the years is the Advent calendar, a themed calendar that counts down the days until the eagerly awaited Christmas Day. Advent calendars can consist of anything from chocolates to socks or miniature figures, such as the calendars made by Lego. But, how did the Advent calendar come to be? What's the history behind it?

The first Advent calendar was built in 1851 by German Protestants who wished to count down the days till Christmas, and its purpose was to celebrate the season of Advent—“the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and also of preparation for the

Second Coming of Christ.” The calendar gained immense popularity throughout Germany. After World War Two, the Advent calendar concept spread to the United States as returning U.S. service members brought the idea along with them. Since then, it has spread like wildfire across the states, especially after national newspapers displayed a photo of President Dwight Eisenhower opening an advent calendar for his grandchildren.

Today, Advent calendars are bought globally as a means to celebrate the impending Christmas Day. As the days of December pass by, Christmas enthusiasts are greeted with a daily mini gift from each Advent calendar box. The calendar not only furthers the spirit of gift-giving but also the Christmas spirit. Consider buying an Advent calendar if you haven't already, and I wish you a wonderful holiday season!



Source: NBC Philadelphia

December Days of Delight by Aarush Ravichand

December, the month of chilly winds, festive lights, and joyful spirits, isn't just about traditional lights and the coming of a New Year. Amidst the familiar holidays, it hosts an amusing array of national and international celebrations that might leave you pleasantly surprised! From honoring cookies and microwave ovens to recognizing the power of volunteerism and classical music, December offers a unique mix of reasons to celebrate.

December 4 - *National Cookie Day*: A day dedicated to the irresistible charms of cookies! It's not just about indulging in these sweet delights but also a time to explore baking creativity. Whether it's classic chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, or experimental recipes, celebrate by hosting a cookie swap party or engaging in a bake-off challenge with friends. Just be warned: excessive cookie consumption may induce a sugar-induced waltz around the kitchen!

December 5 - *International Volunteer Day*: A day to recognize the power of giving back. Get involved in community service or volunteer activities. Organize a fundraiser with friendly competitions or challenges to raise awareness. Dress up as your favorite superhero and become a volunteer crusader, spreading kindness like confetti. Remember, helping others doesn't have to be serious; laughter is the best volunteer uniform!

December 6 - *National Microwave Oven Day and Walt Disney Day*: An odd yet delightful combination! While celebrating the convenience of microwave ovens, channel your inner Disney magic by hosting a Disney movie marathon. Whip up some popcorn in your microwave and immerse yourself in a world of animated wonders. Perhaps try recreating your favorite Disney scenes while waiting for that beep of the microwave—just don't turn into a pumpkin after midnight!

December 15 - *International Tea Day*: A day to celebrate the soothing elixir of life—tea. Arrange a tea-tasting session with friends, trying out various blends and sharing hilarious anecdotes. Create your unique tea blends and name them after your friends or famous personalities. Be adventurous; challenge yourself to brew the perfect cuppa and avoid the temptation to reenact the Boston Tea Party in your kitchen!

December 29 - *International Cello Day*: A day celebrating the soulful melodies of the cello! Host a mini-concert with friends or attend a classical music performance. Try your hand (or bow) at playing the cello, even if you've never touched a string instrument before. Just ensure your neighbors are music enthusiasts too, or else they might mistake your efforts for a whale calling contest!

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December doesn't just bid farewell to the year; it's a merry-go-round of unexpected celebrations! From baking cookies to embracing volunteerism and honoring musical instruments, each day offers a unique reason to spread joy. So, whether you're indulging in tea, singing carols, or clumsily playing the cello, December's eccentric holidays remind us to embrace laughter, creativity, and the joy of simply celebrating life!



Source: PicCollage

Christmas Gift Ideas for Kids

by Ethan Kim

With the upcoming Christmas season, thinking of presents to give for our friends and family can be difficult sometimes. Everyone knows the feeling of getting a present that seems pretty thoughtless, like some socks, so, in turn, you don't want to give a bad present to someone else. However, depending on the age range, you'll need to change the present for this age to make them happy.

Children ages zero to five, they probably don't need a gift that's very thoughtful. For example, a gift as simple as Duplo Legos can be very fun to play with for a child that young. Also, it would be somewhat more difficult for the child to accidentally ingest the pieces. Additionally, the kid is less likely to get bored of the Duplo Legos compared to just a ring stack since they have a lot more creative freedom to create shapes that they want. Another potential gift idea for kids that are this young, magnetic tiles are also a good alternative to the Duplo Legos. They are fun to stick together, have versatility to them, and are relatively cheap. As long as it's not a big magnetic tile set like a big castle, it is relatively inexpensive. These are also pretty easy to clean up by sticking the tiles together and storing them away for future use.

From ages six to twelve, there's a lot more presents that they could want. It would really depend on what the kid likes for presents. But if you need more of a general gift that could

work for anyone, then getting a Lego set is a solid option. It doesn't need to be a gigantic lego set that will cost hundreds of dollars, but rather a smaller set that costs around 30 to 50 dollars. It's still a bit expensive, but it is a gift for someone else after all. However, not every kid likes to build something and would rather have something soft like a squishmallow. Squishmallows are super soft and they can range from many different sizes. You can give a miniature one or if you want to give a big squishmallow that is also possible. Squishmallows can be a bit pricey as well just to keep in mind.

From ages thirteen to eighteen, it's usually hard to determine what they would want as a Christmas present. However, giving a hoodie to people that are teenagers is a solid gift. You can give them a hoodie that is Christmas themed in green and red, or a hoodie in a neutral color. Customized hoodies can also be a good present depending on the person that's getting it. It's more risky to give a customized hoodie because there's a slight chance they would just much rather prefer a plain hoodie. Overall, hoodies are very nice to have and a good gift to give to someone you don't know too well.

Hopefully this gift guide has given you some insight on what to give the kids in your life. They'll be sure to enjoy whatever you get them— I know I would!



Source: iStock

MEDIA REVIEW

Book Review: *The Woman in Me* by Britney Spears by Valerie Polukhtin

If someone were to ask me what comes to mind when I think of Britney Spears, the first thing that pops in my mind is that iconic, “It’s Britney, B—!” The sass, the tone, the simplicity – everything about it feels like the quintessential pop star from the 2000s. So, when I heard Britney Spears was releasing a memoir, I knew I had to pick it up.

And yet, this book gave me a dollar store Britney. For all her fame, you’d think she could hire a better ghost writer because the writing was so bland, I had to check I was reading the right book. There was nothing witty, there were no meaningful anecdotes, and there was nothing distinguishing her voice from anyone else’s. Britney often spoke about experiencing social anxiety, particularly when performing, but she didn’t truly communicate the depth of any of her emotions to her readers.

In the descriptions of her childhood, the writing is a bland accumulation of what any singer or actor may write: how her voice lifted her out. But except for her hometown or name-dropping not-yet-famous celebrities Britney met, you’d easily forget this is Britney’s life and not some other

nameless singer. My sister and I used to perform crazy dances for our parents, but why aren’t we popstars? Or somehow, in describing her rise to fame in her teenage years, the only thing she remembers is running into a spring door? In all her years in the industry, did she really have such few interesting moments, such few crazy people? I mean, she describes visiting Donatella Versace in Milan in September 2002 as, “We drank amazing wine and ate amazing food.” I think that line summarizes how exciting this memoir got.

In the second half of the book, Spears veers away from describing her rising status to more serious matters: speaking out against manipulative boyfriends and her abusive family. She discusses her mad infatuation with Justin Bieber. When he breaks up with her, he releases multiple songs about her cheating on him. This is one of the few points where Britney mounts criticism against Hollywood for being much more lenient with men than women. And yet, the writing still felt lackluster. She remarks, “May I just say that on his explosive album and in all the press that surrounded it, Justin neglected to mention the several times he’d cheated on me?” with the same emotion as asking about the

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weather. Britney forgives Justin, and her words lack intense emotion, as if Justin not understanding his power over Britney justifies any of the emotional abuse she experiences. In fact, it's a general trend throughout her memoir. The writing has brief moments of intense anger or hatred or fear or guilt, but overall feels detached. It's possible her publisher wanted to create an image of a mature popstar ready to move on, but it also made it feel that the abuse was almost forgiven. It sent the wrong message, that we should forgive the mistakes of others to make moving on easier.

The relationship with her second husband, Kevin Federline, is even worse it seems from what's been reported in the media. Spears describes symptoms of intense postpartum depression and the lack of real support. It's with such pain that she describes how Kevin did not help her take care of the babies but later took them from her. And then, Britney starts describing her life under her conservatorship, a legal procedure in which someone has control over the the financial and personal affairs of a minor or incapacitated person. Her parents claimed Britney was not mentally sane in order to control her, using their position to take her wealth while forcing her to perform. I will not describe it here because I cannot do her story justice, but it's a horrifying story of financial, emotional, physical, and reproductive abuse I wouldn't wish upon anybody.

It is worth noting the memoir had its highlights. While it must have been traumatic to discuss or write, its publication alone feels incredibly powerful. And at a few rare instances, Britney offers insightful critiques into the industry. The memoir certainly generated my sympathy and support for Britney as well as general awareness on exploitation in media industries. But I do not believe it generates all the hype around it. Her story may be powerful, but ultimately the quality of the memoir is too disappointing to deserve the attention it's received thus far, or to merit any of you reading it.



Source: Google Images

P.S. MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS!

by: Payton Dymek and Stephanie Lobodanescu

P.S. What are YOU listening to?   

Music

 **stressing for college applications**  **jingle bops**

Based on your recent listening

 **Think Later: Tate McRae**  **Fruitcake: Sabrina Carpenter**  **Apaloosa Bones: Gregory Alan Isakov**

 **Need new recommendations? Discover more, including some "Witz from the 80's!"**

 **Scott Street: Phoebe Bridgers**  **Just Like Heaven: The Cure**  **All I Could Do Was Cry: Etta James**

 **Home**  **Search**  **Library**  **Premium**

QUIZZES

What Type of Holiday Person are you?

by: Anastasia Sheleg

Have you ever wondered what kind of holiday person you are? If so, you're in luck! Grab your calculator and get ready to be amazed....

1. What is your favorite Christmas song?
 - a. *All I Want for Christmas* by Mariah Carey (10 pts)
 - b. *Last Christmas* by Wham! (20 pts)
 - c. *White Christmas* by Bing Crosby (30 pts)
 - d. *Underneath the Tree* by Kelly Clarkson (40 pts)
 - e. I hate all Christmas songs, they make my ears bleed (5 pts)
2. What is your favorite winter treat?
 - a. Hot cocoa (10 pts)
 - b. Christmas cookies (20 pts)
 - c. Ginger bread (30 pts)
 - d. Candy canes (40 pts)
 - e. I hate all things that are sweet and bring joy to life (5 pts)
3. What is your favorite winter activity?
 - a. Building a gingerbread house (10 pts)
 - b. Staying cozy inside (20 pts)
 - c. Building a SnowMan (30 pts)
 - d. Sledding/Skiing (40 pts)
 - e. Just sleeping (5 pts)
4. What's your favorite part of the Holidays?
 - a. Spending time with family (10 pts)
 - b. Taking a break from school (20 pts)
 - c. Decorating (30 pts)
 - d. THE FOOD (40 pts)
 - e. Nothing (5 pts)
5. How do you feel about the cold?
 - a. I love it! I still don't know why I live in Arizona (10 pts)
 - b. Yeah, I like it (20 pts)
 - c. It's ok, I guess (30 pts)
 - d. Not really (40 pts)
 - e. No way! That's why I live in Arizona (5 pts)
6. What's your favorite winter holiday?
 - a. Christmas (10 pts)
 - b. New Years Eve (20 pts)
 - c. Hanukkah (30 pts)
 - d. Kwanzaa (40 pts)
 - e. I'm only here for the winter break (5 pts)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

(30-50) The Grinch 😞 : You're really only here for the winter break and because your mom forced you to participate. RIP.

(55-120) The Basic One ✨ : Don't take offense to this, but you're just like everyone else. There's nothing wrong with that, you like the basic things that make the holidays fun and cozy. Who cares if you're not that special?

(125+) The Cool One ✨ : You have the best combination of the holiday spirit and fun, unique traditions with friends and family. Overall you just want to have a great time, spend the holidays with your loved ones, and relax.



Source: FreePik

HOROSCOPE

by Neha the Precognitive and her Loyal Scribe, Valerie

Aries (March 21st - April 19th): It's time to spruce things up! Try to embrace the festive spirit, and you might find you have a new sense of fulfillment.

Taurus (April 20th - May 20th): Winter is coming, and so is tragedy.

Gemini (May 21st - June 21st): The cold winds bear good tidings for you this month.

Cancer (June 22nd - June 22nd): Remember to be patient; hot chocolate only tastes good after you've given it a minute to cool.

Leo (July 23rd - Aug. 22nd): An overly ornate Christmas tree is never fun to have to take down.

Virgo (Aug. 23rd - Sept. 22nd): Prepare for a month of joyful confusion.

Libra (Sept. 23rd - Oct. 23rd): This month, you will learn of a life changing revelation about who really puts the present under your tree.

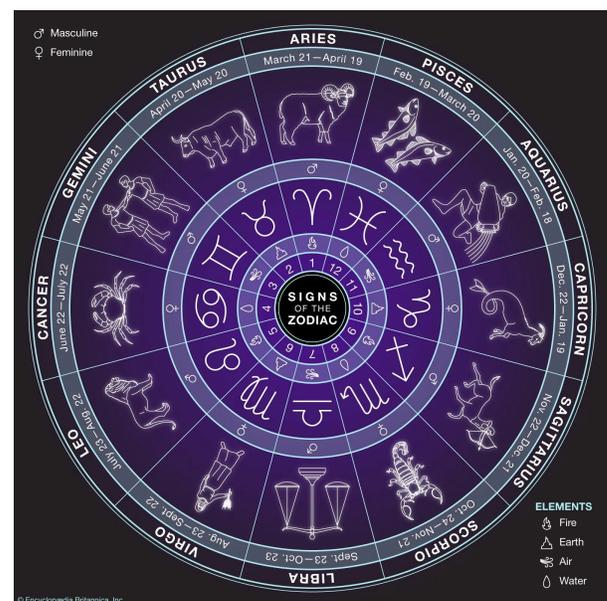
Scorpio (Oct. 24th - Nov. 21st): Don't be caught under the mistletoe with the wrong person.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22nd - Dec. 21st): Exciting news awaits you in the middle of this month!

Capricorn: (Dec. 22nd - Jan. 19): Watch out for the sharp end of the seemingly sweet candy cane.

Aquarius (Jan. 20th - Feb. 18th): For you, winter is a time where all the excess joy from summer has finally been blown away.

Pisces (Feb. 19th - March 20th): With the first snowfall, comes the next chapter of your life. Good or bad - you'll just have to wait and see!

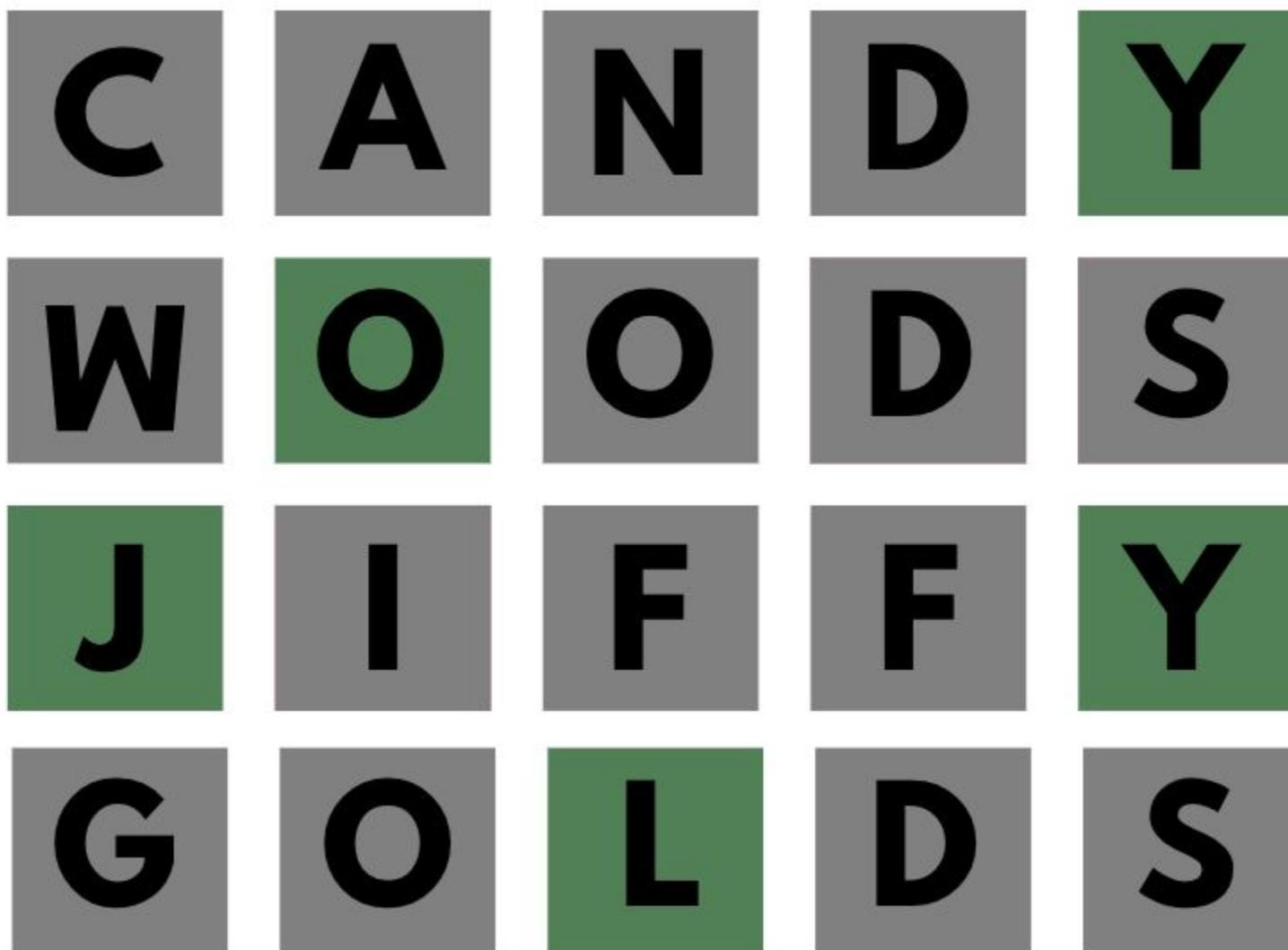


Source: Britannica

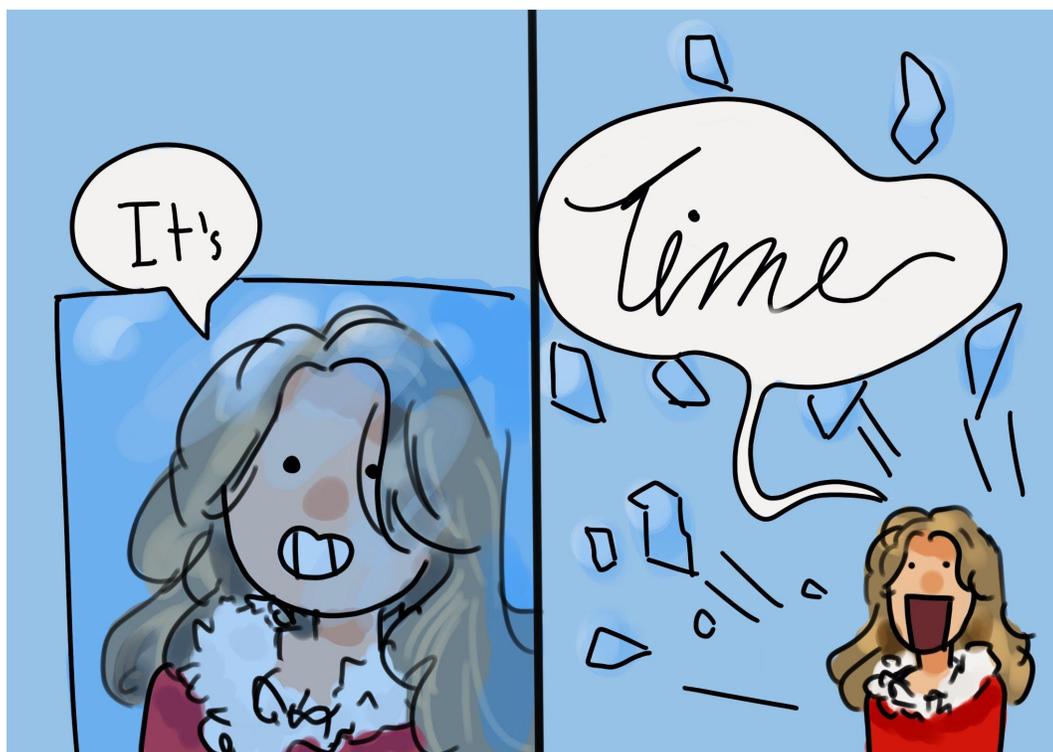
PUZZLES

El Wordo

by: Payton Dymek



Answer on Page 21



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